

Research & Evaluation Implementation Plan

Action Item #1: Build partnerships between industry, governmental agencies, universities, and the private sector to identify mutual interests, needs, and to leverage resources.

Partnership: Commitment to be a part of the process and see the process through. Active participation in achieving the goals and actions that we implement.

Needs: Research needs may vary among the stakeholders, however some commonalties will exist. A partnership will provide grounds for discussion on what is needed for everyone.

Leverage resources: This will follow when the partnership is built. An active partnership will include matching of funds and providing in-kind support to synergize the effectiveness of research efforts. The partnership will leverage available dollars and resources to focus collectively on the most important research for the transportation community.

Issue/Goal: To display that research and evaluation is important to the public and transportation community. To merge talents and expertise into a comprehensive plan to advance transportation. To define and prioritize the needs of the multi-modal transportation community for MDOT and other transportation agencies. To measure the effectiveness of research through a distinct comprehensive implementation plan that monitors, evaluates and markets research. Baseline goes beyond Michigan to find representative models to structure after. Ensure that stakeholders are involved in the partnership.

Tasks:

1. Developed charter for the Michigan Transportation Research Board (MTRB). Awaiting approval.
2. Establish an implementation plan for MTRB.
 - Appoint executive committee.
 - Aim for regularly scheduled meetings of MTRB.
 - Consider orientation days for expertise categories for small groups to meet and discuss particular research.
 - Stakeholders to be involved in the Board (stakeholders are identified in the Attachment to the MTRB charter).

* Please note attached MTRB charter for more information.

Action Item #2: Develop a process to implement research findings.

Tasks:

1. Investigators identify implementable research findings and recommend implementation plans in final reports.
2. The project managers cross check and confirm investigators' recommendations.
3. The sponsoring agencies identify projects in which research findings are implemented.
4. Monitor and evaluate implementation effectiveness.
5. Research and sponsoring agencies will publicize research findings.
6. MTRB annually reviews implementation plans from completed research projects and makes recommendations for improvement.

Action Item #3: Evaluate the balance between the allocation of funds to planning vs. research.

The 75% for planning and 25% for research allocation is not flexible. This requires the action team to research other funding sources.

Tasks:

MTRB needs to broaden research funding opportunities.

- Pool sources with other states.
- Champion NCHRP projects.
- Cost sharing with stakeholders to fund research initiatives.
- Explore setting aside a percentage of operational funds or capital outlay for research similar to European model (not project specific).
- Encourage research component for major projects.
- Encourage use of operational budgets for studies and evaluation of new methods, materials and emerging technologies.
- Make a business case and lobby for legislative action.

* Refer to attached information for reference.

Research funding is an issue of great concern and should receive high priority. Additional funding resources must be identified and secured for a highly successful and robust research program to follow and support the creation of the Michigan Transportation Research Board (MTRB).

The research funds available to MDOT through the federal State Planning and Research (SPR) program are limited and won't sufficiently cover all the research needs in the future, especially with the increased emphasis on inclusion of all modes in the mix. The inauguration of the MTRB and the Michigan Transportation Research Consortium (MTRC) will require funding outside the SPR biennial work program, as the administrative operation of these entities may and probably will be ineligible for federal funding.

The knowledge behind the adoption of this action item was probably generated from an unfamiliar awareness of the process and the regulations governing the distribution and allocation of research funds under the federal SPR program.

In 1991, federal legislation, TEA-21, gave each state transportation research program a newly defined amount of money that proved to be a substantial increase over previous years and decades. Under the SPR program, it is legislated that states must provide a minimum of 25% of

the available funds to research under the Part II program, with planning getting the remainder. Most states allocate 25% to research , 75% to planning.

In Michigan, we tried to secure an increase (25%) in this amount but due to the size and needs of the planning program this was impossible.

Federal SPR Part II funds amount to about \$4 million/year with over \$1 million coming off the top for Michigan's share of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) and for the Transportation Research Board (TRB).

In general over the past 15 years, the SPR program did not have enough money to fund all the priority projects. The program requires that the state provide a 20% match. It should be noted that no other state funds are directly dedicated to research projects. MDOT spends less than 0.10% on research and in comparison the private sector the range is anywhere from 3% to well over 10%.

This issue should be about adequate funding for research in the future, especially with increased modal emphasis and with the inception of the MTRB and the MTRC.

Issues

- SPR funds are limited and set by law.
- More funds outside the SPR program are needed for transportation research that will be multi-modal in nature.
- The creation and administration of the MTRB, as well as the MTRC, will require new funding sources.
- MTRB will generate new research projects that may require alternative sources of funding.
- Legislative action may be necessary to support the expansion of Michigan's transportation research program.
- Resources, especially within MDOT, are limited and will not adequately support an expanded research program (i.e. project management, technical expertise, funding, administrative support, etc.).

Action Item #4: Support and expand the LTAP program to assist in technology transfers across political levels and support the local effort through incentives to use the resulting technology.

Tasks:

1. Utilize the existing LTAP resources to publicize the road and bridge findings.
2. Explore possibilities of utilizing the existing infrastructure of LTAP in serving a multi-modal function.
3. Establish and nurture links between MTRB and LTAP.
 - Participation of Michigan Tech personnel familiar with LTAP.